



State of Arizona
Department of Education

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Superintendent of
Public Instruction



Early Childhood Education Alert

ECSE

June/July 2008

Updates for Early Childhood Special Education

Preschool Entitlement Grant. Grants are posted July 1st and are due August 10th. We will be updating the list-serve from the grants. We suggest that you have at least two different people listed as contacts for your district. It is also imperative that preschool program personnel have input into the grant application in order to submit the most accurate data possible about your program. There is a section about the Early Childhood Quality Improvement Process (ECQUIP), which is the same for the Early Childhood Block Grant application. The intent of ECQUIP is for all early childhood programs to collaborate and develop one unified plan so each application should reflect the same information. We strongly suggest that Head Start and any onsite community preschools or community preschool you may partner with be a part of your ECQUIP team. <http://www.ade.az.gov/earlychildhood/ECQUIP/>

Get Ready for the New Year! Keep in mind using your Preschool Database to track your preschool's important data (attached). This overall data is important to understand your numbers from year to year (July 1st to June 30th) and will help with administrative support. You may also track information such as number of screenings, number of evaluations and number of children that did not qualify (DNQ). If your DNQ numbers are too high you may use that data to re-examine your screening process and why you may be over identifying children at screening.

Help For Early Learning Professionals (HELP). The HELP manual is available on our website at <http://www.ade.az.gov/earlychildhood/preschool/programs/presch/HELPManualFINAL.pdf>. It covers everything from Child Find to Comprehensive Developmental Assessments (CDAs) to Transitions to School-Aged Services. We suggest you print it on two sides and place in a notebook with tabs and use it for ongoing reference. In an effort to reach more areas of our state the **HELP Conferences** will be held in Window Rock and Yuma.

Child Find. The beginning of the year is a great time to conduct your annual Child Find district in-services. Sign in sheets and agendas should be maintained for monitoring purposes. The Child Find Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) provides information regarding the process for children birth to age 5. We recommend the Child Find Tracking forms be kept in a notebook with a central person who is responsible for referring children ages birth to 3 to Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP). Child Find trainings for your district will identify that central person to whom referrals are made. Please see the Child Find section in the HELP manual and the website at www.azed.gov/earlychildhood under Early Childhood Special Education then Child Find.

Early Intervention Transitions. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires 100% compliance on the State Performance Plan Indicator 12: Preschool Transitions. Meeting compliance for this indicator is factored into your school district's performance rating from the Arizona Department of Education. Joint regional trainings with Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) and Arizona Department of Education (ADE) were held for all districts and all service coordinators last year. This year, trainings will be offered at the Early Learning Institute June 16-18, the Directors' Institute, September 8-12, and the Navajo County Special Services Conference in Holbrook on September 20th. Targeted trainings will also be planned for those districts that are not in compliance for three consecutive years.

For those districts not in compliance for three years, funds may be interrupted until adequate compliance is achieved. (Your district will receive a letter to this extent). Please review Early Intervention Transition information on our website. Remember, transition meetings are to occur between the child's age of 2-6 and 2-9, and the IEP must be written by the child's 3rd birthday. Services may actually begin after age 3 based on the contents of the IEP. If you are having any difficulty with transitions, contact Rita Dickinson at 602.542.2727 to initiate an "AzEIP Alert".

Ongoing Progress Monitoring (OPM) Data/SAIS. The next submission of data will be due no later than December 31st. We suggest submitting data as soon as it is available. Remember, data is collected in an ongoing manner and should not be a "Thursday" activity. It is important for program coordinators to build a relationship with the district SAIS person and to have your collection of OPM from Head Start included in your Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Preschool Assessment Manual may be located at <http://www.ade.az.gov/earlychildhood/downloads/PreschoolAssessmentManual.pdf>

Head Start. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) should be updated. Processes and procedures for screenings, referrals and collection of OPM data should be clearly outlined and jointly agreed upon. See page 46 of the Preschool Assessment Manual for more information. Once a child is referred to a district regular timelines take effect: 45 days to complete screenings and 60 days to complete the evaluation/eligibility process. Keep in mind that Head Start has a screening process and personnel who can assist in this process. Training Head Start personnel in your district's screening process may help to expedite the process and get children evaluated in a timely manner. Early Intervention is key and delays to the screening and referral process may be detrimental to children. If you need technical assistance, please contact Mark Nagasawa at 602.542.1135.

Upcoming trainings. Keep an eye out for upcoming trainings from the Early Childhood Education unit at www.ade.az.gov/online/registration.